

# High Maintenance Christians

# What Are High Maintenance Christians?

- “High-maintenance Christians are those that require a lot of attention and energy from others. Like a ‘lemon’ car, they constantly need fixing and prodding to run. High-maintenance Christians, always seeking to have things done to and for them, drain the vitality of the church and other believers who are gracious and generous in providing encouragement and support. While it is a privilege to receive help from our fellow Christians, when excessive garnering of support becomes a manner of life, that person is not walking according to the Spirit of God.” *(Vic Edwards, Are You a High Maintenance Christian?)*

# What Are High Maintenance Christians?

- “There are impossible people who beef, bite, and bellyache. They give you the cold shoulder, require special attention, play the victim, dominate, or trample other people's feelings. The Scriptures are clear that as believers, we are to ‘carry one another's burdens.’ But the same Scriptures teach just as clearly that ‘each one is to carry his own load.’ The high-maintenance Christian is not carrying his own load. Unless constantly nurtured, patty-caked, and encouraged by others, these people will quickly fall away from faithful duty to Christ.” *(Dr. Les Parrott, How to Handle Difficult Relationships)*

# What Is The Issue?

- 1Cor. 3:1-3 - “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?”
- Heb. 5:12-13 - “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.”

## How Do We Change The High-Maintenance Lifestyle?

- There are no easy answers to this question. The change will occur as we grow in our faith and understanding of God's will
  - Rom. 14:19 - “Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.”

## How Do We Change The High-Maintenance Lifestyle?

- Stop thinking about and demanding what you believe you are entitled to, and start looking for someone to help or something to do.
- Do not expect return or reward for your gracious services. Stop expecting others to praise you for your service.
- Be diligent in what God has already given you to do. Think about how you can do it and not about how others can do it for you.
- Stop thinking about getting your way and start thinking about what is best for others; give consideration to their feelings and not just your own.

# How Do We Bear With Those Who Insist On Remaining High Maintenance?

- Are we simply left to bear with the difficulties they create?
  - Rom. 12:18 - “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

# How Do We Bear With Those Who Insist On Remaining High Maintenance?

- Don't let a difficult person determine your mood and behavior.
- Set your boundaries.
- Guard against infection.
- Rather than focusing on trying to change other people, decide to change the dynamics of how you interact with them.
- Realize that all people are valuable and loved in God's eyes
- Consider the grace God has extended toward you, and try to extend grace to others you encounter.

## Fellowship Should Be A Blessing, Not A Burden

- One of the blessings enjoyed in Christ is help from brethren in times of spiritual crisis
  - Gal. 6:1-2 - “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

## Fellowship Should Be A Blessing, Not A Burden

- At the same time, every Christian has a responsibility to grow beyond being helped to being capable and willing to be of help, not only to themselves, but also to others.
  - Gal. 6:4-5 - “But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load.”
  - Heb. 12:12-13 - “Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.”

## Fellowship Should Be A Blessing, Not A Burden

- We will be held accountable for our own actions; we will be unable to shift any amount of that accountability to others we believe should have helped us, or we blame for discouraging us
  - Rom. 14:12 - “So then each of us shall give account of himself to God”

## Fellowship Should Be A Blessing, Not A Burden

- Not all high maintenance Christians are alike
  - Babes in Christ just starting their new spiritual life
  - Burdened or grieving Christians who need others to seek them out and lift them up
  - Lethargic Christians who attend and work only when constantly admonished and pressed
  - Self-centered members that expect others to cater to their moods or they will leave in a tantrum.

## Fellowship Should Be A Blessing, Not A Burden

- Some churches can be high maintenance
  - Corinth was - 1Cor 3:1-4
  - Philippi was not - Phil. 1:3-7

## Fellowship Should Be A Blessing, Not A Burden

- Some high maintenance members can be good and healthy for a local church
- A great deal of attention is crucial for the newborn Christian's survival
  - Rom. 15:1 - "We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves."
- Extra attention is essential for hurting Christians
  - 1Thes. 5:14 - "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all."

## Fellowship Should Be A Blessing, Not A Burden

- But high maintenance Christians can hurt a local congregation
- When it hinders the growth of the church by siphoning away the efforts, energy, and resources of busy workers
- Paul desired to preach where Christ was not named, but he had to continually refocus his attention to the high maintenance Christians at Corinth - Rom. 15:20; 2Cor. 12:14-15

## Fellowship Should Be A Blessing, Not A Burden

- When more serious needs go unmet
- Babes in Christ are overlooked, because others expect coddling. The spiritually sick and dying are neglected and lost, because others demand attention
  - Prov. 18:9 - “He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.”

# Making Our Fellowship A Blessing To Others

- We must choose to grow; it is a choice every Christian can make and follow through with action
  - Heb. 5:12 - 6:1 - “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. 6:1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God...”

## Making Our Fellowship A Blessing To Others

- When we are growing and developing as babes in Christ, we often “borrow” the courage, faith, and strength of disciples around us. But we cannot do that throughout our entire lives
- We need to learn to be self-strengthening and resolve to survive on the strength God gives us

# Making Our Fellowship A Blessing To Others

- Phil. 4:11-13 - “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
- 2Cor 1:3-6 - “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. 6 Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.”